

## THE WINDOW

### UNCLE SAM MOBILIZES MANPOWER

#### UNEMPLOYMENT IN RETROSPECT

**M**ARCH 1933 saw the peak of unemployment in the United States, with a total of 14.8 million people out of work. Since then, their number has—with the exception of 1938—steadily declined and was given as 8.5 millions in August 1940 in the official compilations of the National Industrial Conference Board and the American Federation of Labor. The trend, basing our figures up to 1940 on those of the *World Almanac* for 1941, was as shown in our chart below.

At the end of 1941, a low of about 3.5 millions (TO, Berne, 5.2.42, and Lisbon, 15.3.42) was reported, so that we may be justified in assuming that the annual average for 1941—bearing in mind the steady downward trend in 1940—was in the neighborhood of 5.5 millions.

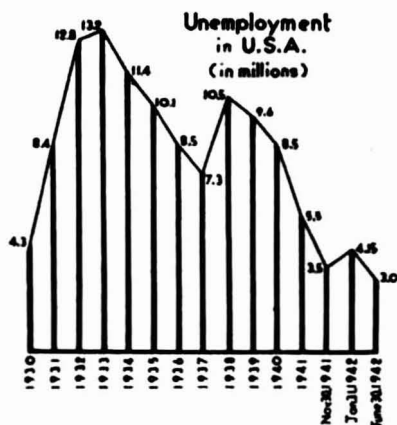
Reasons for the decrease in unemployment figures can be attributed to increased production on behalf of the Defense and Lend-Lease Programs as well as a steadily growing demand for goods on the part of those consumers who were already engaged in making munitions of war. At the same time, after many years of unemployment, the majority of these new workers doubtless felt entitled

to a higher standard of living. 1940 and 1941 were boom years, with production and sales figures reaching new highs. The Office for Production Management tried, albeit unsuccessfully, to curb those industries which, in spite of a threatening raw-material shortage, continued to increase their output for civilian consumption. For the first time in twenty years, *Nation's Business* found itself able to announce that for August 1941 every section of the country had reported more activity than in any of the preceding years.

#### A NEW WAVE OF UNEMPLOYMENT

Then came December 8, 1941, and immediately the War Production Office was vested with what were virtually dictatorial powers of management and control. The raw-material priority program of 1941 was relegated to the limbo of forgotten things and replaced by an outright allocation system. Hundreds of factories were compelled to close their gates; 44,000 automobile dealers, and with them fully half a million of their employees, found themselves bereft of a livelihood (Domei, Stockholm, 9.1.42), while more than 200,000 drivers were reported workless owing to WPO restrictions (TO, Lisbon, 12.5.42). On January 18, 1942, Reuter reported from Washington that altogether 4 million workers were expected to be temporarily jobless as a result of the shifting of various industries to war production. A more recent official announcement gave the number as over 6,000,000 (TO, Berne, 5.2.42). But apparently the number of workers securing employment under the armament program was almost as great. For, by the end of January 1942, the unemployment figure was 4,150,000 (TO, Lisbon, 15.3.42) and by June 1, 1942, it had declined to around the 3 million mark (TO, Stockholm).

In normal times, the combined figures of registered employed and listed unemployed represent the normally available "labor capacity."



This figure has steadily increased in the USA in recent years :

LABOR CAPACITY IN THE USA

Year	Total of employed and unemployed as registered by the C.I.O. and A.F.L. (in millions)
1930	48.9
1931	49.5
1932	50.1
1933	50.8
1934	51.3
1935	51.6
1936	52.2
1937	52.7
1938	53.3
1939	53.9
1940 (August)	54.6

We are justified in assuming that the number of available workers, the "normal labor capacity," has continued to increase at least at the same rate as in former years and had thus reached the 56,000,000 mark by the end of 1941.

## MEN WANTED !

At that time, war industries alone employed a total of 5,200,000 workers, but it was estimated that altogether 15 million would be necessary to carry out the projected armament program (Havas, Washington, 8.1.42). Such a prospect presaged virtual industrial chaos and necessitated the immediate creation of a special War Manpower Commission, under the chairmanship of Mr. Paul V. McNutt, to study, ascertain, and follow the best possible ways of mobilizing and exploiting human resources in the United States (Havas, Washington, 18.4.42, and Domei, Lisbon, 27.4.42). It should be noted, however, that, whereas the above-mentioned Havas despatch of January 8 indicated a shortage of only 10 million workers for the armament industries, Mr. McNutt, on April 20, estimated the number of new labor recruits for 1942 at 13 millions (Domei, Lisbon, 21.4.42).

As was to be expected, the unemployment problem now begins to be overshadowed by an acute shortage of employables—not only in the field of skilled but also in that of unskilled labor. In Alaska, for instance, lack of hands coupled with restricted means of transportation will reduce the salmon catch by more than 50 per cent this year. During 1942, railroad companies will have to employ an additional number of at least 320,000 men. All conscription, therefore, of railroad employees, as well as of coal miners and shipyard

workers has been canceled (*Time*, 18.5.42). In the Middle West a shortage of alarming proportions among farm laborers is feared, which will affect the reaping and harvesting of next season's crops (TO, Lisbon, 7.6.42), and it was asserted that California's farms would face ruin unless Americans called up for military service—and, incidentally, Japanese farmhands who had been interned—were replaced without delay. A total of 395,000 hands are said to be required between now and October (DNB, Madrid, 17.6.42). A sudden decline in the volume of fresh vegetables reaching local markets, accompanied in turn by rising prices, has already been reported (Domei, Buenos Aires, 21.6.42). In this connection a report is of interest regarding the rejection of an appropriation of \$75,000,000 for the continuation of the Voluntary Labor Service, popularly known as the CCC, one of the finest institutions in the country (TO, Stockholm, 7.6.42). This will mean the release of some 200,000 young men, who will be free to secure other employment.

## ENTER MISS AMERICA

Official figures of gainfully employed women covering recent years are not available to us, but if these have increased in the same ratio as those of the total of gainfully employed persons, their number must approach the 11 million figure. The number of women employed in the manufacturing and mechanical industries at the end of 1941 can be roughly estimated at 2 millions. Out of this total, half a million were reported to be working in war industries in February 1942, but WPO sources predicted that this figure would exceed 2 millions by the end of the year (TO, Washington, 18.2.42).

Mr. Paul V. McNutt is reportedly convinced that by the end of 1943 at least 4 million women will be employed in war industries (TO, Stockholm, 27.5.42) and, overlooking no possibilities, Mr. McNutt has indicated that the females to be employed should be both attractive and good-looking in order to make the men work more industriously (TO, Stockholm, 27.5.42). The National Labor Supply Board, which was superseded by Mr. McNutt's War Manpower Commission, had already conducted an elaborate survey with the object of determining the particular jobs wherein women might effectively replace men (TO, Washington, 18.2.42). Using the statistics for 1930, we find the following approximate distribution of female labor :

## FEMALE LABOR IN USA IN 1930 (in per cent)

Agriculture .....	8.5
Manufacturing and Mechanical Industries..	17.5
Transport and Communications .....	2.6
Trade .....	9.0
Public Service .....	0.2
Professional Service .....	14.2
Domestic and Personal Service .....	29.5
Clerical Occupations .....	18.5
	<hr/> 100.0

The above total of 100 per cent represented only 22 per cent of the total female population. Even if this latter figure has meanwhile risen to 25 or even 30 per cent, war industries should be able to draw a considerable number of female labor recruits from the remaining 70 to 75 per cent of women who are still entirely without remunerative employment. Moreover, a large percentage of those women engaged in domestic service (29.5 per cent) and the manufacturing and mechanical industries (17.5 per cent) will be available for armament jobs. It remains to be seen, however, whether the war industries will be able to secure the co-operation of an additional 3.5 million women, which is the figure to which Mr. McNutt aspires.

## WOMEN IN UNIFORM

It should be remembered that Mr. McNutt is not alone in the race for assistance from the fair sex and has—although personally quite an Adonis—far more attractive competitors with jobs to offer which promise excitement, thrills, and adventure. Already the US Medical Service has called for a greater number of nurses than were required in the days of the first World War (Domei, Lisbon, 12.1.42) and on June 10, 1942, the US Red Cross announced in an appeal broadcast over a wide network that it is in urgent need of 55,000 more nurses (TO, Lisbon, 11.6.42). (The American Nurses' Association had 157,461 members in 1940.)

But first choice, undoubtedly, for every smart American woman and girl will be the WAAC, the "Women's Auxiliary Army Corps," which is to have natty uniforms with badges, stars, and stripes for those promoted to one of the four officers' and noncommissioned officers' ranks (TO, Lisbon, 28.5.42).

## CONSCRIPTION

The absence of 25,000 or even 150,000 members of the WAAC, and of 50,000 to 100,000 nurses from war-production jobs appears negligible when compared with men,

a large proportion of whom are highly qualified, listed for conscription in the armed forces. The army enters the picture to demand the largest contingent of men, although the actual numbers said to be required vary according to different sources: on January 16, 1942, Secretary of War Stimson said that the army would be increased to 3,600,000 during 1942 (DNB, Panama, 16.1.42), and Mr. Sidney Hillman, co-director of the WPO, on January 15, 1942, was already hinting at a projected strength of 5 million (Reuter, Washington, 15.1.42). Meanwhile, John G. Winant, US Ambassador to London, announced in a luncheon address given there on January 28, 1942, that the establishment of an army of 7 million was being planned (TO, Stockholm, 29.1.42). The navy will call a million men for duty, all of whom must be sufficiently qualified to man modern warships, besides being able to handle complicated mechanical equipment.

## A BALANCE SHEET

If the President's armaments program is carried out to the letter, the following major war-time contingents will have to be furnished out of the country's "normal labor capacity" of approximately 45 million men and 11 million women:

	Men	Women
Army and Navy	8,000,000	—
War Industries	14,000,000	4,000,000
Total	22,000,000	4,000,000

It remains to be seen whether the United States will be able to keep its civilian machinery running with the remaining 23 million male and 7 million female workers, and to what extent the total labor capacity can be increased by mobilizing retired people, housewives, and students, in addition to those groups likely to lose their present jobs due to the closing down of non-essential industries and business enterprises. Undoubtedly, a full-sized industrial revolution is ahead.

## SKILLED LABOR

Main concern of the war industries is the deficiency in the supply of skilled labor. Qualified workers are needed in an, as yet, unknown number of defense posts. Union labor has never been eager to increase the number of skilled workers; all the more so in an era when millions were unemployed. Whereas in 1930 the number of skilled work-

ers was given as 6 millions, Mr. Sidney Hillman gave it as only 5 million at the end of 1941 (Reuter, Washington, 15.1.42). So acute is the shortage of skilled labor that some branches of the armament industry have been compelled to slow down production (DNB, Lisbon, 23.4.42), and the War Manpower Commission had to decree the establishment of a labor priority system (TO, Lisbon, 21.4.42). A month later it was learned that measures had been taken by the War Department to render it impossible for armament workers to leave their present employment without a special permit from the Federal Labor Board. Thus an end was put to a procedure defined as "labor piracy," which was being exercised, particularly by the aircraft industries, to entice qualified workers from other companies by offering higher wages (DNB, Lisbon, 1.6.42). Does this spell the end of a free labor market?

The National Defense Mediation Board has been replaced by a 12-man National War Labor Board (Domei, Lisbon, 13.1.42), composed of representatives of the army and navy, the Administration, industry, and three members each from both the A.F.L. and C.I.O. The Board will mediate or arbitrate whenever labor disputes threaten the prosecution of the war effort, and will confer with the President periodically in the projection and planning of war production and the means of industrial mobilization (Reuter, Washington, 7.2.42, and Havas, Washington, 16.4.42).

#### FEWER STRIKES AND BETTER WORK

The time lost through strikes from February 7 to March 26, 1942, was given as "only one day per man in thirty years of work" by Mr. William Green, chairman of the A.F.L. (Reuter, Washington, 27.3.42). That would amount to one quarter of a day per man in a year, against a figure of two fifths in 1939.

A large-scale publicity and enlightenment program has been embarked upon in order to drive home to American workers the necessity for producing more, and to convince them of their importance in war production. A spirit of responsibility will thus,

it is hoped, be created among them. Factories with good production results will receive awards. Their workers will be given free trips to witness army maneuvers, where the arms produced by them will be demonstrated (TO, Lisbon, 26.2.42).

#### 40 OR 48?

Between industrialists and Labor there is a wide divergence of opinion with regard to the advisability of abolishing the 40-hour week and overtime pay (TO, Stockholm, 22.3.42). Supporters of abolition maintain that "a 40-hour week cannot win the war" (TO, Lisbon, 26.2.42), but how unpopular the 48-hour week still is was clearly shown when, on February 28, the House of Representatives rejected, "amid great cheering," a proposal for the suspension of the 40-hour working week (Reuter, Washington, 28.2.42). The chief of the WPO himself advised against its revocation, pointing out that the majority of workers were already doing more than 40 hours. He advocated, however, an appeal to workers voluntarily to do their utmost to increase production (TO, Lisbon, 25.3.42). A similar stand was taken by Colonel Frank Knox, Secretary of the Navy, who declared at a Congressional hearing on April 14, 1942, that "suspension of the 40-hour week would cause confusion and hamper war production" (Havas, Washington, 14.4.42), and the US House Labor Committee, by a slim majority of 13 to 12 votes, rejected a proposed increase from 40 to 48 working hours on May 1, 1942 (TO, Lisbon, 2.5.42).

The President succeeded in pleasing Labor and armament industries at one and the same time when, on March 24, he declared himself to be opposed to giving up the legal 40-hour week (TO, Lisbon, 25.3.42), and, only four days later, signed a law providing for a 48-hour week in industries where it is considered indispensable (TO, Lisbon, 29.3.42).

Incidentally, Independence Day was declared a normal working day this year (TO, Lisbon, 28.6.42), which, all things considered, appears to be a very opportune decision at a time when the true significance of that day has so completely passed into oblivion.—R.S.